

REMARKS

Claims 1-10, 13-15, 17-19 and 44-47 are pending in this application. In the Board's decision dated May 21, 2004, the Board affirmed the Examiner's rejections of claims 1-10, 13-15, 17 and 44-47 but reversed the Examiner's rejection of claims 18 and 19. On July 19, 2004, Applicants submitted an Amendment After Appeal in which claims 1, 6, 17, 18 and 19 were amended in order to address the Board's concerns and to place all of claims 1-10, 13-15, 17-19 and 44-47 in condition for allowance.

In the September 21, 2004 Office Action, the Examiner stated that only Claims 18 and 19 are pending in this application, and stated that Claims 18 and 19 are incomplete because the claims upon which they depend have been canceled by the Examiner in accordance with MPEP 1214.06. On October 13, 2004, the undersigned attorney for Applicants advised the Examiner that an Amendment After Appeal had already been filed addressing the matters raised by the Examiner in his Office Action, and the Examiner advised that he had not seen the Amendment After Appeal prior to issuing the September 21, 2004 Office Action. The Examiner agreed that submitting a response to the Office Action and forwarding a copy of the July 19, 2004 Amendment After Appeal would be an appropriate response to the September 21, 2004 Office Action.

Accordingly, Applicants herewith submit a copy of the July 19, 2004 Amendment After Appeal for consideration by the Examiner in response to the September 21, 2004 Office Action. In the event that the Examiner cannot enter all the amendments made in the Amendment After Appeal, the Examiner is urged to enter the amendments that are acceptable and not to enter the amendments that are not acceptable.

Conclusion

Reconsideration of the present application, as amended, is requested. If, upon review, the Examiner is unable to issue an immediate Notice of Allowance of all claims 1-10, 13-15, 17 and 44-47, the Examiner is respectfully requested to telephone Applicant's undersigned attorney in order to resolve any outstanding issues and advance the prosecution of the case.

An early and favorable action on the merits is earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

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December 8, 2004

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P.O. Box 1450
Alexandria, Virginia 22313-1450

Re: U.S. Patent Application No. 09/098,204
Filed: June 16, 1998
Our Ref.: 209-1099CL

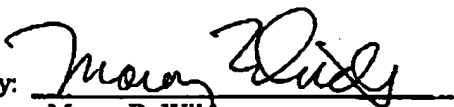
Dear Sir:

Please prepare and forward one (1) certified copy of U.S. Patent Application No. 09/098,204 filed on June 16, 1998, on an Expedited Basis. Kindly charge our deposit account 50-0552, for the \$20.00 fee.

Thank you.

Respectfully submitted,

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